

Effective Volunteer-Based monitoring for European Green Crab in Puget Sound.

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The European Green Crab Monitoring Project is a volunteer-based program funded by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) as part of its Aquatic Nuisance Species Program. The discovery of European green crab (*Carcinus maenas*) on Washington's outer coast in 1998 and its subsequent spread to Vancouver Island prompted the formation of the Puget Sound monitoring project in 1999. This species is very prolific and has the potential to devastate Washington's \$74 million commercial shellfish industry, as it has done to east coast shellfisheries. The green crab monitoring program is operated under contract by the Puget Sound Restoration Fund with Nahkeeta Northwest as volunteer coordinator. In 2004, the program had completed its sixth year of monitoring with more than 100 active trained volunteers covering 73 sites throughout the Salish Sea (Puget Sound, Georgia Strait and the Strait of Juan de Fuca). These dedicated citizens set traps for green crab as a first line of defense against this voracious invader. In the process, they donate a maximum of 4,000 hours annually and submit over 500 intertidal data records. The success and efficiency of this volunteer monitoring program provides a significant return for the effort and serves a vital role in early detection and rapid response in the event green crab enter the Salish Sea.